

**NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Office of Accountability**

**Differentiated Accountability - School Quality Review (SQR)**

**SCHOOL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT**

<b>BEDS Code:</b>	662200010012
<b>District Name:</b>	White Plains City School District
<b>School Name:</b>	White Plains Middle School (Highland and Eastview Campuses)
<b>School Address:</b>	128 Grandview Ave. White Plains, N.Y. 10605
<b>Principal:</b>	Jonathan Brown (Highland) and Joseph Coherty (Eastview)
<b>Accountability Phase/Category:</b>	Improvement (year 1) - Focused
<b>Areas of Identification:</b>	English Language Arts - Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners
<b>Dates of On-site Review:</b>	December 19 and 21, 2011

**PART 1: MISSION STATEMENT**

“To educate and inspire all students, while nurturing their dreams, so they learn continually, think critically, pursue their aspirations and contribute to a diverse and dynamic world.”

**PART 2: SCHOOL STRENGTHS**

- There are many extracurricular activities in place and used by students.
- Both campuses have programs for after school homework help, and students have access to teachers for extra help.
- There are remedial support programs in reading for students.
- Both campuses have structured routines for safety; halls are orderly during transitions and staff is visible.
- There is evidence that school leaders meet regularly with staff about effective instruction and to discuss alignment and rigor for new standards and assessments.
- School leaders are actively involved with the data process and are leading the development of systems for collection and analysis.
- Many mathematics teachers have in-depth training in Performance Plus and have the skills to be turnkey trainers.

- School leaders are proud of their school and its role in White Plains.

### **PART 3: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **I. COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND UTILIZATION OF DATA**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- The collection of data is focused on State assessments and the school is involved with the development of Common Formative Assessments (CFAs).
- Performance Plus is available and has potential, but not all staff is comfortable and confident in using this support.
- There is limited data collected for students with disabilities and English language learners (ELLs).
- There is little evidence of information to target instruction and enrichment or to correct learning errors.
- Internal data that is integrated into instruction is not consistent with the subgroup data generated from State assessments.
- Pull-out program teachers have limited access to the classroom teacher to share results and plan for collaborative interventions.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Formative and interim assessments should be used regularly to generate data that is closely aligned to the P-12 Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and New York State (NYS) assessments.
- Data from assessments should be made available to inform teachers of students' knowledge and skills and to influence instruction. If students have not mastered previous skills and knowledge that is critical to the current learning level, teachers should be prepared to adapt the instructional process with differentiation of activities or text as needed.
- There should be a system used for data collection and analysis in which data is collected, stored, and then analyzed to impact daily instruction, program review and selection of students for supports.
- Data for reading skills should be available to all staff and accompanied by teaching strategies to impact instruction across all disciplines.
- The Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) should define how teachers will have access to data and how the data will be analyzed and used to impact student performance, e.g., Performance Plus.
- School leaders should use data and establish protocols to enhance articulation between classroom teachers and intervention specialists.

## II. TEACHING AND LEARNING

### FINDINGS:

- Classrooms were well-organized, and management practices were appropriate.
- Teachers are using the techniques they learned in professional development (PD), e.g., Writers Workshop, Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports (PBIS), and lesson planning; some consistently use 'best practices'.
- Many supports, often pull-out programs, are provided to students with disabilities and ELLs.
- Differentiation of instruction is limited in general, but higher occurrences of differentiation exist in specialized programs, such as Read 180 and Achieve Learning Program (ALP).
- Intervention specialists who support classroom teachers often work with multiple grade levels, which results in limited time and access to classroom teachers for articulation and planning.
- Variations in instructional practices and activities were noted during classroom observations; specifically the level of rigor for students with disabilities and ELLs was part of the variation.
- Objectives were posted, but varied in how they were used to focus instruction.
- There is limited use of closure and formative assessments.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- School leaders should develop consistent practices driven by clear objectives that reflect rigor and are aligned to the CCLS and NYS assessments to guide instruction and learning.
- Closure should help focus the learning and direct next steps.
- Gathering data about learning by using formative and interim assessments should guide interventions and daily "fixes" for instruction.
- High return learning strategies and processes should be consistently used in all classrooms.
- Instruction should have purpose and relevance to develop students' skills to answer essential questions and solve problems.
- There should be systemic approaches for student engagement in the learning process, which would be useful to develop self-directed learners and academic skills for use across disciplines.
- Rubrics should be used in order to influence grading policies and encourage self-assessment by students.
- School leaders should implement PD for all staff to develop skills and practices to regularly differentiate

- Literacy should be addressed in all disciplines, and teachers should acquire knowledge and skills to enhance reading comprehension.

### **III. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

#### **FINDINGS:**

- Although the styles and experience of the school leaders of each campus are different, they spend time together to develop common policies and practices.
- School leaders are knowledgeable about their schools and their needs and are involved in most major decisions.
- The school leaders have routines and meetings designed to enhance student and parent involvement.
- Interviews revealed that parents felt connected to the school and appreciated the school counselors and academic support that helped their students accomplish their goals.
- Data is important to the school and is used to make decisions for academic programs.
- At each school, the staff views their campus head as the leader of the school.
- The leadership team is very positive and knowledgeable; they make decisions based on good research and what is best for students.
- Most programs are initiated by the District office, are research-based and designed to improve results.
- The structure of two campuses creates two distinctive learning environments.
- The mission statement and guiding principles are not part of the daily decision making process, and the Strategic Plan (2007) is being revised.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- School leaders should develop a CEP that clearly communicates priorities, goals and expectations in a realistic time line.
- Leadership, on all levels, should have common goals and criteria to make decisions regarding the Re-design Project.
- The mission (Strategic Plan 2007), vision and beliefs should be articulated and used to formulate the schools' programs.
- The process should foster “buy-in” by the faculty to focus daily decisions.

- The new organization for next year should be based on student development; staff involvement will be key to managing a large number of changes.
- School leaders should identify best practices that promote success for all subgroups and focus on how to communicate with parents and staff to support high academic expectations.
- School leaders should regularly share data, analyze the information and adapt programs and services for students.
- Leadership, on all levels, should foster a culture of change. Planning and communicating with staff will help staff understand expectations and involve them in the transitions.

#### **IV. INFRASTRUCTURE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

##### **FINDINGS:**

- Criteria that will guide the Redesign Project are in development.
- There are many new assessments and programs to support students.
- The school schedule limits the level of articulation when multiple teachers support a student. This is especially true for students who have support outside the classroom.
- At the current stage of development, there is limited data to analyze and evaluate results.
- There is limited evidence that data for subgroups is integrated into the analysis system.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The Redesign Project should develop learning environments that will prepare students for the rigors and challenges of high school and help them to be self-directed when they leave grade 8.
- Evaluating how students and teachers are scheduled should be a major factor in the CEP and the structure of the two campuses.
- The academic, social and emotional attributes of students upon middle school graduation should help define exit outcomes.
- Schedules should be structured that will:
  - maximize articulation;
  - provide common planning time;
  - allow advisories that support a strong sense of community;
  - help foster supports outside of English language arts (ELA); and
  - lead to true teams.

- The school should explore the feasibility and staff readiness for co-teaching, and possibly interdisciplinary teaching, for ELLs and students with disabilities.
- The school should create a yearly schedule that allows time to share teaching strategies, analyze data to inform instruction, and make adaptations to CFAs and the curriculum.

## **V. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **FINDINGS:**

- There are many excellent teachers to model techniques and develop internal capacity.
- The Professional Learning Community (PLC) is a major investment of time and staff have a strong voice in topic selection and implementation.
- The alignment of the PLC process to CCLS, NYS assessments or subgroup needs is not always apparent.
- There are new specialized programs, but some staff who are not directly involved are unaware of the programs.
- The review team observed a need for follow-through and support to implement new programs effectively.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- The school should develop a CEP that focuses on PD for programs that will have the greatest impact on student results and success.
- Due to limited time for PD, school leaders should prioritize the programs and develop clear performance expectations that will demonstrate mastery.
- The school leaders should plan for additional PD because new organizational structures that will result from the Redesign Project will require new skills and knowledge.
- School leaders should promote staff inter-visitation to share best practices and model new methods of instruction.
- The CEP should include specific programs to support ELA, ELLs, and students with disabilities.
- Differentiated and focused support for many programs, i.e., Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), etc. should be used to enhance literacy and results for subgroups.

## VI. FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

### FINDINGS:

- The schools have space and facilities to support most special learning needs.
- All classrooms have SMART Boards and computers available, but a technology plan is not evident.
- Interviews revealed that parents have limited ability to help their children and would like more materials and programs to support their children.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Technology curriculum plans should be redeveloped to reflect updated requirements and best practices. Students should be provided increased access to technology to support their learning and develop their skills.
- Faculty should be trained in technology as needed, and technology should be used to assist remediation and preventative instruction.
- Ways to extend learning time for ELLs, including the use of interactive software via the Internet or other means, should be investigated. Extended time to practice and share results with parents can address multiple goals to improve student achievement.
- The school should continue to review technology that is aligned to CCLS and can effectively support students with disabilities.

## PART 4: CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Both campuses have similar core academic programs, but are distinctive. The student population, demographics and programs for ELLs and students with disabilities are not identical. A Redesign Project is underway and will be served well by having clear criteria to guide the decision making process. Student development needs (academic, social, emotional, physical), and research on successful school models should help guide the process and decisions.

There are strong academic staff that need more expertise in inclusion classrooms, co-teaching and differentiated instruction. Formative and interim assessments should be used regularly by teachers to correct learning errors and adapt instruction. Additional self-assessment by students, guided by rubrics and benchmarks, should guide instruction. The systems to collect and analyze data, evaluate academic progress, and adapt curriculum and instruction are not fully developed.

The findings and recommendations noted in the report are intended to guide the school's inquiry, planning, and the development of the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP) for school year 2012-13. The school should also continue its efforts in the implementation of the following Regents Reform Agenda initiatives: P-12 Common Core Learning Standards, Data Driven Instruction and the Annual Professional Performance Reviews for teacher effectiveness.